



U.S. Department of Justice

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FORMER AREA RESIDENTS PLEAD GUILTY TO MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS OF THREATS OF PERSONAL INJURY TO FEDERAL AGENTS

ROCKFORD – PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and ANDREW L. TRAVER, Special Agent-In-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, today announced:

JEREMY DIXON, 27 (DOB: 11/19/1976), formerly of Rockford, Illinois, and **MICHAEL REES**, 22 (DOB: 07/22/1982), formerly of Freeport, Illinois, each pled guilty in federal court to making false statements to Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (“ATF”) agents earlier this year. Each defendant admitted to falsely claiming that they and their families had been threatened because Dixon had previously provided information to the ATF in a criminal investigation. Dixon pled guilty on September 28, 2004, and Rees pled guilty today.

In pleading guilty, both Dixon and Rees stated that prior to May 26, 2004, Dixon had provided information to the ATF regarding federal firearms offenses that had allegedly been committed by an individual under investigation (“Individual”). The defendants admitted that starting on May 26, 2004, they began falsely telling ATF agents that they had received threats from the Individual because Dixon had provided the information and because they were potential witnesses against the Individual. According to their plea agreements, Rees and Dixon offered to pay a co-worker to falsely tell ATF agents that the co-worker had been approached by an unknown person and asked to relay a threat of physical injury to Rees and Dixon, when no such threat had been made. In pleading guilty, the defendants admitted that they falsely reported the threats to the ATF agents because their prior criminal records were preventing them from obtaining employment and that they believed that the false reports of threats would require the ATF to provide them each with a new “identity” and Social Security number.

Sentencing for Dixon will be conducted on November 30, 2004, at 10:00 a.m. Sentencing for Rees will be conducted on November 30, 2004, at 10:45 a.m. Each defendant faces a maximum of 5 years in prison, a fine of up to \$250,000, and a term of supervised release of up to one year following his release from prison. The actual sentence for each defendant will be determined by the United States District Court, guided by the United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The case was investigated by the Rockford office of the ATF. The case is being prosecuted in federal court by Assistant United States Attorney JOSEPH C. PEDERSEN.

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